Introduction

This is a conversation between Rudy Kopf and Anna Mary Kopf, taking place in Las Vegas in 1973. This is likely recorded inside of Anna's home. This is shortly after the death of Max Kopf (Maximilian Josef Kopf the Second) and only a couple of years after their move from Buffalo, New York to Las Vegas. Rudy is Anna and Max's eldest son.

The conversation starts and stops multiple times and jumps subjects.

Topics and People

The family is connected across Bavaria, including Zürich, Munich (München), and Schliersee. The timespans covered are a bit over 100 years, from the mid 1800's until the recording in 1973.

People

- Anna "Mela" Mary Kopf (born Meier)
- Rudy Kopf, Anna's son
- Anna Meier (born Schreiber), Anna's Kopf's mother
- Ludwig Meir, Anna Kopf's father
- Wilhelm Schreiber the Second, Anna's Uncle
- Maximilian "Max" Josef Kopf (the Second), Rudy's father, Anna's husband
- Maximilian Josef Kopf (the First), Max's father, Rudy's grandfather
- Theresa Kopf, Max the Second's sister
- Lina Kopf, Max the First's sister
- Josef [Krausalina?], Max the First's brother in law by marriage through Lina Kopf
- A mention of the Rothschild family
- Karl Schreiber, Unknown relative of Anna's
- A wealthy relative named Baron von Hirsch, likely Maurice de Hirsch
    - The description of the family crest here also matches Maurice de Hirsch

Topics

- The war of 1870, the Franco Prussian War.
- Anna's grandfather on her mother's side paid a Hessian to fight in the war in his place.
- The Zeigeleier (brickyards) in Zurich and Munich, which apparently have a connection to Anna's extended family.
- Baron von Hirsch possibly funded the Bavarian King and also set up education for Jewish people in the region. This was likely up to 1871, and even a bit beyond, as that's when Bavaria joined the German Empire (after the war).
- Max the First's parents were Grocers and Importers.
- Theresa Kopf was apparently killed by the German government in the mid 1930s
- Hotel Seehaus, later renamed Hotel Treofal (website), still exists as of 2025, which Max's Dad (Maximilian Josef Kopf the First) owned at one point.

-

Transcription

Anna: … One could buy a substitute, one could pay a substitute, and the substitute could go to war.

Rudy: I'll turn this off for a second.
[Feedback Noise, Rudy muttering]
… prevent the sound from bouncing back and forth. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.

Anna: I'm Anna Mary Kopf, and I was just talking about my grandfather on my mother's side. The father of my mother. And when the 1870 war came, he was drafted, or called, to the army service.

Rudy: Ok

Anna: And very probably, his father, through the Zeigeleier [literally "brickyard"], or brick factory, paid for a substitute, something compared to the Hessian soldiers.

Rudy: Like during the American Revolution?

Anna: During the American Revolution. And this man substituted for grandfather, and grandfather by then already had one son, Wilhelm Schreiber the Second. Which was also, somehow, considered in drafting people or not drafting them. And the substitute never came back alive, he was killed in the 1870 war in France. Then here comes another thing about…

Rudy: [muttering, must be changing recording]

Anna: Baron von Hirsch was knighted and given the title "von" by the Bavarian King. And thinking about it, how that might have come to pass. I think, just like [Neild?] in England helped Queen Victoria finance many of her, how do you say, not exploitations, but, they made, uh, colonies. They made colonies, with her colonization, that were very probably, I mean there's a possibility, that he helped finance that 1870 war, or anything else, or any money that the Bavarian government needed, and that he might have been knighted for that. There are other possibilities too, but [...]

[Is this Maurice de Hirsch? The timeline, the reference to the Jewish schools, and the coat of arms match]

Rudy: Was the Bavarian, was the Baron a Bavarian?

Anna: Ja [Yea], mhmm. He was a Bavarian, and he was knighted. The only member of the [tape damage]
… migrate from Germany into the United States, to establish themselves here as farmers. Because Baron von Hirsch thought that not enough Jewish people are going into farming. And they should. He wanted to encourage them to start it. But like now in Israel, they are starting it. Israelites as farmers. He had that same idea a hundred years ago.

Rudy: In the 1870's?

Anna: Around 1870. So I think that it's an interesting thing too.

Rudy: Mhmm, there should be some [existence of?]

Anna: Ja, I don't know where I could find out. A couple of years ago, it was reported in either the Buffalo Courier, I believe, or the Buffalo Evening News, in the Sunday paper, I believe. Moving from Buffalo to Las Vegas, I could not locate that article anymore, seemingly.

Rudy: When did you move? What year?

Anna: Last year.

Rudy: When was that, 19…

Anna: 1972. Moving from Buffalo to Las Vegas. In November.

Rudy: November of '72. That's a little over a year.

Anna: Ja, mhmm.

Rudy: Hm. The coat of arms was used by the men in the family.

Anna: Mhmm.

Rudy: Ok, [unintelligible] coat of arms.

Anna: [unintelligible] Hirsch [...]

Rudy: With a deer in it.

Anna: It's a deer… that's bigger than a deer.

Rudy: An elk.

Anna: Ja.

Rudy: Uh huh. Ok. Let's see.
[Tape skips. Rudy must have turned off the recorder]

Anna: Rothschild [unintelligible] or something like that, it was not a regular family name because [...]
[Tape cuts again]

Anna: In 1936, I visited my mother, Anna Schreiber Meir in Berlin, and we made a trip to München, or Munich. München Bogenhausen and visited the relatives. And Wilhelm Schreiber the Second, my uncle, said at that time: when I was young, and my father put his pride into it, that I would get a university education. Which…

Rudy: He put his pride in it?

Anna: I mean he was proud that he could send his son to the university, that he could get a better education and get into a better occupation. And he said: now looking back at it, maybe it would have been much better financially to try and get a hold of as much as we could of the Zeigeleier, and be owners or part owners. Because the Zeigeleier in Bogenhausen in 1936 was the largest German Zeigeleier or brick manufacturing yard.

[Tape skip]

Anna: [Unintelligible] from the, oh, birth certificates.

Rudy: [Dr?] Kopf's [?]. Where?

Anna: From München, Munich. What you call… statistics. Ja.

Rudy: Where in, what part of Munich would that be?

Anna: City hall.

Rudy: Oh, Munich city hall. Ok. Kopf claim and Kopf records can be found…[writing]

Anna: Munich City Hall…

Rudy: in Münch City Hall…

Anna: So… [unintelligible]
[tape skip]

Rudy: 1926 plus or minus, can you guess?

Anna: No, I don't know anymore…

Rudy: Could it be as late as the 1930s?

Anna: It could have been. But I don't think so because I think by then they were [?] by that length of time. And he wrote us, her husband wrote us, that we should pay for her, what would you say, confinement to the insane asylum because he didn't have the money. And we were just starting… It must have been shortly after '24, maybe '25 or '26, because we were starting out so miserable, no money that we just couldn't pay for her, to be sent. His father, for many years, extra money. Then came that problem that we should send for his sister too, and we just couldn't do it.

Rudy: Had you ever met her?

Anna: Oh yea.

Rudy: What was she like, was she short?

Anna: No. Very pretty.

Rudy: [writing] Was she shorter…

Anna: Dark haired, and I think she was taller than he was. Dark haired and dark eyes, there might be a photo [unintelligible, shuffling]

Rudy: Oh

Anna: [unintelligible] extremely pretty girl, extremely well dressed always.

Rudy: Did she have… was she intelligent?

Anna: Ja.

Rudy: She was?
[tape distortion]

Anna: Her mother couldn't see anything wrong in her. [Rudy writing]
Here was in my dancing class [probably a photo]

Rudy: Well let's see. I don't want to get off the subject.
Well later, I think that, um, she was probably gassed.

Anna: Ja.

Rudy: Later with what… What's the word? She was exterminated or something.

Anna: Ja.

Rudy: Because I remember Dad saying that, um, [writing, muttering] … concentration camp. A letter that was returned, sent…

Anna: Ja. To the people in Schliersee, a letter was sent to…

Rudy: [writing] Sent by Dad…

Anna: No, not by Dad. By the people in Schliersee from the hotel, you know… Either it was the hotel owners or next door. The people who sent her a letter, and…

Rudy: It was returned

Anna: It was returned, as uh…

Rudy: As uh, this person no longer… Do you remember how it went?

Anna: That she, she was eliminated.

Rudy: This person no longer exists, right?

Anna: No. But all the people knew what would happen to them if they were incurably… As soon as they said they're incurable, then they would, something would be done to them.
[Rudy writing]
At that time that her husband wrote that we should pay for it, we didn't know that she might someday be gassed, so we did not know that. In '36 she was still alive.

Rudy: She was still alive in 1936?

Anna: Yea, when I was visiting my mother. Because my mother said that she had visited her, and had brought her things to… Here this was Karl.

Rudy: I don't know who Karl is…

Anna: Karl, Karl Schreiber. [Siad?] this too.

Rudy: Ok. [writing] Grandmother Meier had visited her.

Anna: Had visited her [unintelligible]

Rudy: Now where was she, where was that?

Anna: In München. My mother, while visiting the relatives in München.

Rudy: The asylum was in München?

Anna: Ja. Well, I don't know whether the asylum was in München or very [unintelligible]. Schliersee had no asylum.

Rudy: So we know nothing more about the…

Anna: The [Devore?] family.

Rudy: Nor…

Anna: The Pilgrimiser didn't know, nobody knew, then we went to the authorities there, and nobody knew what happened to Leonard and his son. Because we were interested in maybe bringing the son back here or what, but couldn't find out anything.

You know, Dad was usually pretty sorrow when he looked for something you know.

Rudy: Well Dad never spoke much about his sister, at least to me. I don't know why not, I wonder why not.

Anna: … too much…

Well, she kind of was against our marriage, and she was behaving very badly. She just took her father, took all the furniture from her father and mother and wanted it all for herself, and said he doesn't need anybody, anything because he should anyways have married a woman rich enough that their father wouldn't have to work anymore, that he could retire on her money.

Rudy: I see, ok…

Anna: That was when we were going together [?].

Rudy: Ok, that's… Now… What about Dad? We know that… Oh, then we don't quite know where Theresa died.

Anna: Ja.

Rudy: But we do know that Theresa and Max were the only two children.

Anna: Ja.

Rudy: And that she was the older of the two. But we know very little about, well we do know something about Maximilian, Dad's father. Which we learned, and that is that he owned a hotel.

Anna: That hotel, Seehaus at that time, now it's Terofal.

Rudy: Now, he was born in Munich. He [received?] the Bürgerrecht of Schliersee. What's a Bürgerrecht?
[note: Bürgerrecht literally this means "Civil Rights", it's unclear if this is a misunderstood title. It could also be Bergerrecht, but that means "Mining Law"]

Anna: Bürgerrecht… that's your [heimachtvect?]... Your Berger… If you're a berger you're better than the average because you have to have property.
[note: Heimachtvect literally means "homecoming", so this is also unclear. It's possible Anna doesn't actually know the meaning from her childhood.]

Rudy: Now one confusing thing is that my father and my grandfather had the same name. Maximilian Josef…

Anna: Ja, they did.

Rudy: But Dad's nickname was always Max, whereas grandfather's wasn't. Ok, but now my grandfather, Maximilian Josef was born in Munich in 18?2…

Anna: Ja, see, his parents had [kolonial bahn algro?]...
That means they sold… They imported coffee, tea, and such things. Importers. And they sold [algro?] in, what do you call it, to the stores. They were the suppliers for the stores. And they supplied these to the Streidenbergers and that's how… how Mark… how they got acquainted with the Streidenbergers and Schreibers.

Rudy: Supplied produce to stores? Alright.

Anna: Ja. Like coffee, tea, sugar, spices. They were importers.

Rudy: Oh, they were importers.

Anna: When they imported the coffee, that's why Josef then went to Buenos Aires. To the coffee company…

Rudy: Now which Josef is that?

Anna: Josef who married Lina Kopf. His uncle, his father's brother, Josef, who married Lina Kopf.

Rudy: Now, are you talking about… Now you think… Are you saying… Now here's Dad, now here's his father, now you're talking about this man was the importer.
[Rudy is probably pointing at a family tree or some notes]

Anna: Ja, they were the importers.

Rudy: Ok. And you were also talking about his brother Josef.

Anna: Ja, mhmm.

Rudy: Alright so there must be someone…

Anna: Ja, I mean we go from Maximilian, his father's brother. His father's brother. Here's his father, and it's in that generation. [mumbling]

Rudy: Well no, now here's my Dad

Anna: Well yea, but I mean his father was in that generation, so then his uncle was in the same generation.

Rudy: Oh, well then it must be somewhere..

Anna: We had before, we had.. That..
[Shuffling and probably looking at papers, photos, or something]

Rudy: Oh here's a Josef [krausalina?]

Anna: Ja, and see and that's him right there.

Rudy: So Josef…

Anna: When he was [unintelligible] Josef [Kopf?] is mentioned. [unintelligible] Here. See here. Born 1865 in München.

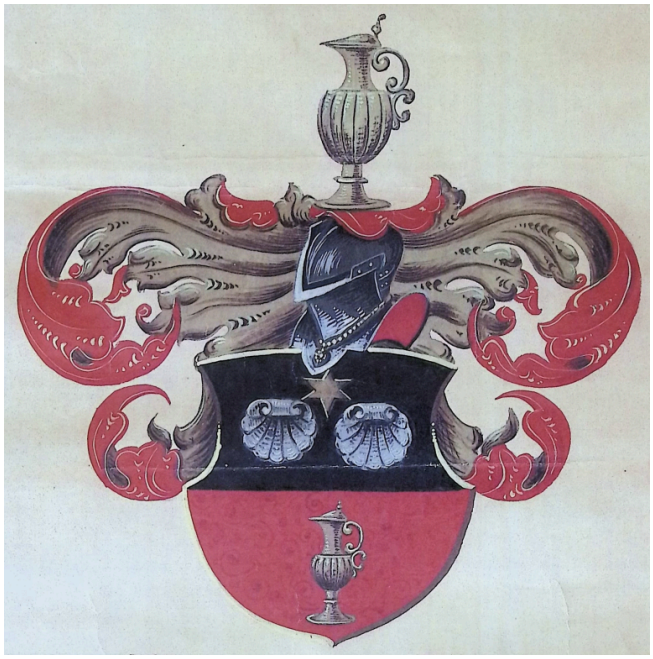
Rudy: Oh, is that this man? Oh, ok, it's spelled J-o-s-e-f. Josef was born in 1865.

Anna: Born 1865 [unintelligible, microphone is bumped]

[Unknown Person]: … unless you wanna talk to her.

Rudy: Can I take this? This is the… stahlin…

Anna: Stahmwopin der Familia Kopf. That means …



Rudy: Coat of Arms

Anna: Coat of Arms of the Family Kopf. Familie Kopf is… es [unintelligible] es geschlict [literally "polished"]. Familie Kopf is very old… very excellent family… or geschlect [not the right word], I don't know… Für en Schwartzesfeld [en stempt?]. Has in a black field, one golden star. And that's six-cornered.

Rudy: A six point star.

[Unknown Person]: Can I interrupt just a minute?
[Rudy must have stopped the recording?]

Anna: There are two… what's the…

Rudy: Shells?

Anna: There are two shells, underneath, in a black field. Which mean high wisdom, and religious feeling. In the red field underneath is a golden.. Uh…

Rudy: Caster?

Anna: Uh, I don't know… A wine?

Rudy: Goblet?

Anna: No, a …

Rudy: I thought a canister.

Anna: Canister?

Rudy: Yeah. Like a pitcher.

Anna: Ja, like a pitcher, ja. And then that means being very friendly to your guests. Very hospitable. The geschlossenhelm above it is a closed helmet, a metal helmet. Which signifies the good worth, or good family that the Kopf's come from.
And then there's another canister way on top. Which means…
Hohe haltenge de taten tugendem [I might be off, but this is "high regard for deeds and virtue"]
That means… Esteem of the, what is the [taten]... of all the

Rudy: Was is yugendem?

Anna: Tugendem. And a tugen is a very… Honorable good deeds.
Hans Kopf, that means Johannes or Hans Kopf, received this Wopin, family coat of arms. And he was a Berger in Zürich in the year of 1436. In order to be a Berger, you had to have property or you couldn't be a Berger. It's an honor… it's a citizenship which is better than the average.
Then comes…

Rudy: "O", can you read…

Anna: O-T-V. Von Heffners, Wartenberg

Rudy: Otee Von Heffners?

Anna: Otee Von Heffners, Wartenberg. Band 4, page 20... Taffel 23. In the [Kurnighlich?] Bayerische Staatsbibliothek. That means State's Library in Munich. That means Hans Kopf, he came from Zürich and migrated to Munich in Bavaria, and put that same family crest into the state's, registered it in the state's library in Munich.

Rudy: Does it say when he migrated?

Anna: Ja, in 1946.

Rudy: No, in 1436?

Anna: In 1436, seemingly.

Rudy: He migrated from Zürich?

Anna: From Zürich to Munich.

Rudy: Oh, I see

[tape skip]

Did you want to mention…

Anna: The same family crest is also registered in the city of Zürich in Switzerland. In the library, we looked it up. "We" is Max Kopf and Anna Kopf.
My husband, Max Kopf, claimed that his father looked up the continuation between…

Rudy: Genealogy

Anna: Geology, genealogy, of this Hans, or Jannes Kopf, from Zürich, to continue into our family, but we have no proof, no written proof of it that I can just produce now. Ok.

[tape skip]

Rudy: Ok. Now, you said that, what is his name? He came back from where, Brazil?

Anna: Buenos Aires [Argentina, not Brazil]

Rudy: Do you want to come this way? Ok. Now where, and what's his name, Josef?

Anna: Josef Kopf, he was the younger brother of Max Kopf [the elder]. And he was the uncle of…

Rudy: That's Maximilian Kopf the First.

Anna: Ja. And was the uncle of Max Kopf the Second. My husband.
And he brought along snakeskins that were at least 12 foot long, if not longer. And spears from Buenos Aires, Brazil [Again, this is Argentina, but Rudy has confused Anna]. He had been outside, in the jungles, in a coffee plantash… Kaffeeplantagen

Rudy: Coffee plantation

Anna: Coffee plantations

Rudy: Ok, well that's where both the anaconda, most of the anaconda snakes are… they are big.

Anna: They are real big

Rudy: Now, was he an importer?

Anna: His parents were the importers. And he was, and then they sent him to somebody who had those coffee plantations that they bought the coffee from.

Rudy: I see. And that was about, when would that have been?

Anna: That was before he got married to Lina Kopf. And he was unmarried.

Rudy: Let's see… and his name was Josef

Anna: Uncle Josef

Rudy: Yes

[tape skip]

Anna: [unintelligible] of my father's and my mother's… what was the name [unintelligible]

[End of Tape]

Notes and References

Max and Anna Kopf, Buffalo NY, July 1947

Anna and Rudy, Buffalo NY, July 1947

Ludwig and Anna (the elder) Meier circa 1904

Anna, Ludwig, Anna (the elder) and Irene Meier, circa 1901

Anna “Mela” Meier and her sister Irene “Wicki” Meier in 1908, likely taken in Bogenhausen

This is a super interesting picture because it has, left to right, Irene Meier, Anna Meir, and a young Lilly Kopf (Max Kopf the Second’s cousin?) in 1908 in Bogenhausen. This seems to align with the recounting here that the Kopfs knew the Schreibers through their importing business.